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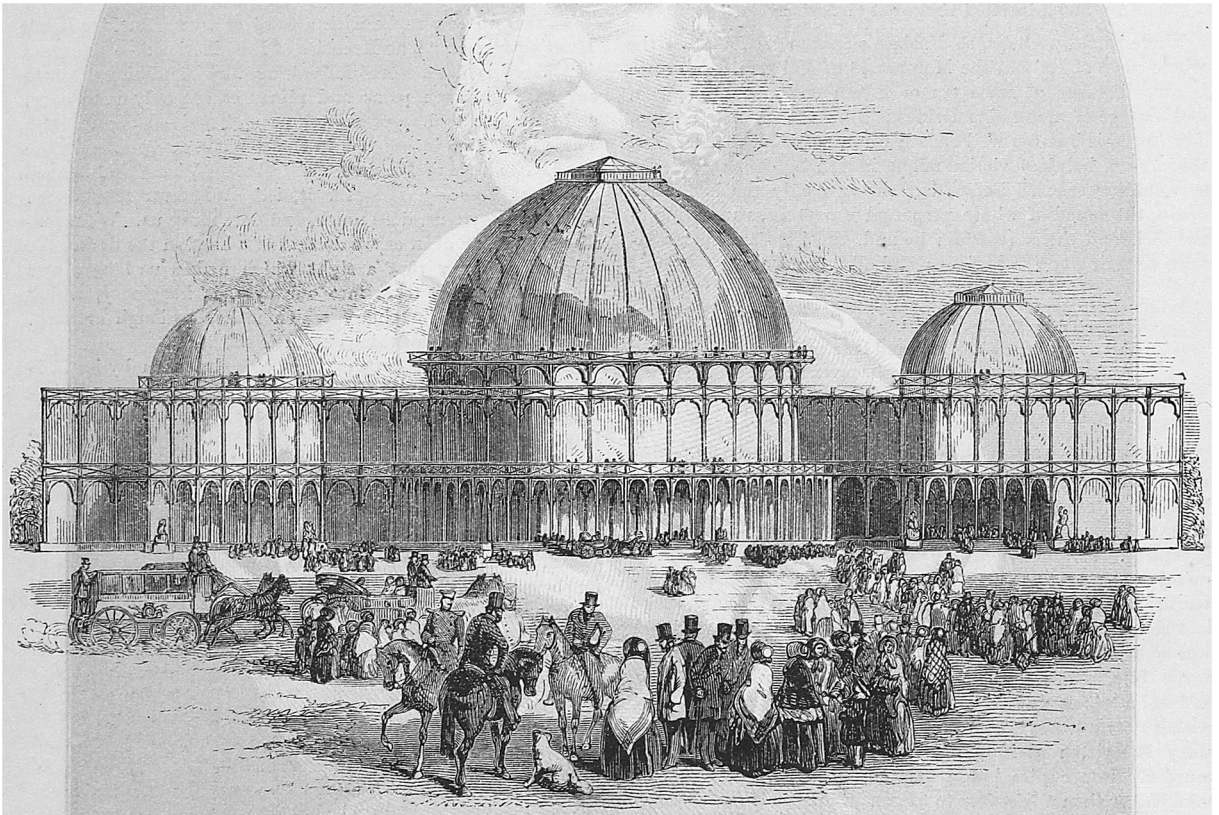
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## WILLIAM DARGAN AND THE IRISH EXHIBITION OF 1853.

THE instances of men achieving splendid success in their calling, and then devoting the fruits of it, not to the purposes of personal aggrandisement, but to the promotion and advancement of the interests of their fellow-countrymen, are now so rare, that William Dargan is in some sort an object for the interest and admiration of all the world. A man in whom so much energy and perseverance are united with so much patriotism, is above all entitled to receive a due meed of praise from America—so many of whose great men have, like him, been self-made, and so many of whose citizens derive their origin from the land upon which his enterprise and philanthropy are reflecting such credit. So, amid all the hurry, bustle, and preparation for our own Exhibition, let us pause for a moment and glance across the ocean at the Irish one and its author.

solid, accumulative, and progressive. Hence the special value of a man of the attributes we have described, having the means and the magnanimity to raise an edifice on a scale of altogether unexampled extent as the creation of private liberality; and for purposes whose utility, whether of a material or a suggestive kind, it is impossible to exaggerate, in connexion with the immediate present or the remotest future of Ireland.

From what we have said as to the ordinary every-day nature of Mr. Dargan's opportunities and pursuits, it will be inferred that his biography abounds in but few ingredients for any very picturesque memoir. And such is in truth the case. There are in it no dramatic lights and shades, transitions, or vicissitudes—either of alternate wonderful successes and reverses in the speculation market, or of popularity and



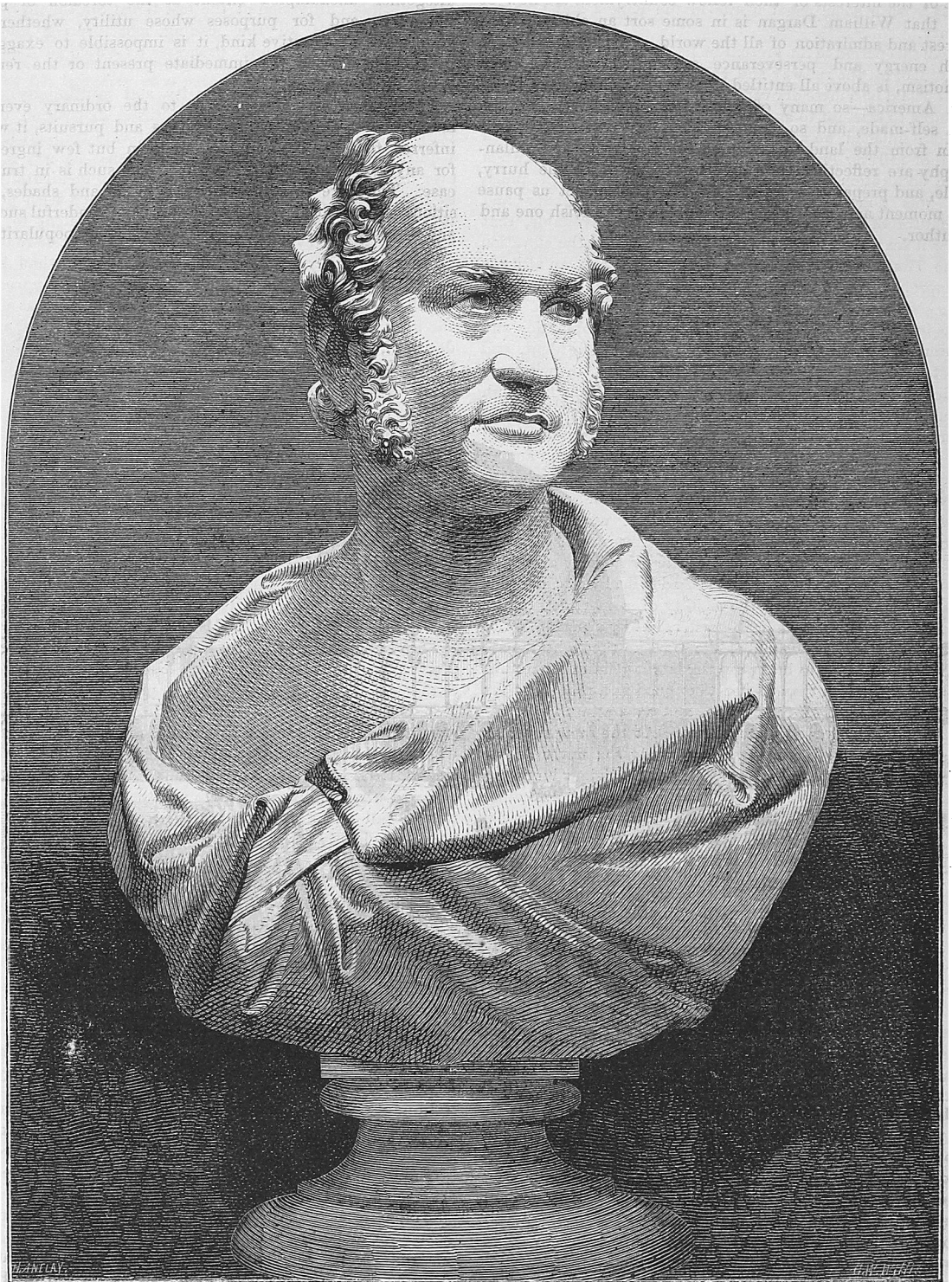
GREAT EXHIBITION BUILDING AT DUBLIN.

Mr. Dargan's individual career pre-eminently serves to point the moral the Dublin Exhibition is meant to inculcate—viz., a splendid incentive to perseverance, punctuality, and self-reliance—an embodiment of the triumph of successful merit achieved by an Irishman, on Irish soil;—not by any adventitious aid from fortune, whether pecuniary or political;—but by probity, patience, and thriftiness at the outset, and by subsequently applying the large means these qualities acquired to the larger enterprises with which his energetic sagacity prompted him to grapple from time to time;—till, at last, the mere word "Dargan" has become the synonyme alike of the magnitude and the success of nearly every great public work in Ireland. There has been nothing startling or surprising in his life, nothing meteoric in his rise, or dazzling in the circumstances that have surrounded him. All has been gradual,

odium in public estimation, such as have distinguished some of the more prominent celebrities of the railway and exchange world in England of late years. All has been uniform, equable, tranquil, and assured. Mr. Dargan has adhered to the golden rule of minding his own business, and a golden result has his devotion to that inestimable maxim yielded. The son of a farmer of moderate means, and of an old respectable family, in the county of Carlow, he received such education as befitted the sphere of his birth and associations. But the instruction proper to such class in Ireland, it must be observed, is very superior to what would be deemed suitable in England; for the children of few British yeomen of even the higher grade are taught as well as the offspring of a far humbler rank in the sister country. Endowed with a vigorous frame and masculine intellect, he followed the ordi-

nary pursuits incidental to his years and position, without manifesting any indications of very marked mental supremacy in the acquirement or the application of knowledge—neither the aberrations nor the exploits of genius. A good

surveyor's office, which he left in search of occupation on his own account, under the grand jury. The failure of this latter application as a tyro in his native country induced him to qualify himself by the acquirement of experience where it



WILLIAM DARGAN.—DRAWN BY ANELAY: ENGRAVED BY WILLIS.

handwriting, a facility in mercantile accounts, rapidity or arithmetical combination, and the command of a nervous, homely, expressive style of composition, were the traits in his school character, as they were also during a brief sojourn in a

was to be had of the most perfect kind, and under the highest of then living supervision. Accordingly he took service with Telford, on that gigantic creation of engineering skill, the Holyhead-road, which at that time was considered as scarcely

less remarkable than is the iron artery now traversing nearly the same route. Here his novitiate was completed; and, armed with his great master's recommendation, he was soon employed on a somewhat analogous effort in Ireland, the Howth-road, the contract for which he obtained after having executed some difficult works in nautical engineering on the Shannon, together with some canal works in the King's and Queen's County.

From this period to the present he has been virtually the heart and soul of all the railway and canal undertakings in Ireland, and it would be a mere dry catalogue of dates and topographical distances to attempt to specify them. When the lines now in hand are finished, he will have completed some seven hundred miles of railway—railway, be it observed, whose execution is the admiration of the engineering world, though much of it was done under circumstances, as to locality and the nature of the manual labour apparently available, that render it scarcely less surprising in its way than is the elevation of the Titanic blocks at Thebes and Palmyra to an altitude incomprehensible to the observer of the present day, because of the seeming inadequacy of the means to the results. But it was in the organisation of the masses, the combination and controul and propulsion of a heterogeneous, discordant, and almost inert myriad of the Celtic peasantry, in whatever district he commenced operations, that stamped the thorough originality of Mr. Dargan's mind; the same sort of faculty under similar circumstances being the distinctive phase in all men, in all ages, who have acquired eminent position among their fellow-men by moulding them to their purpose, whether in the cabinet, the legislature, the camp, or among the "navvies." Order, discipline, punctuality, unanimity, and progress, immediately supervened wherever Mr. Dargan appeared, no matter how chaotic the physical, and how contradictory the moral, elements he had to deal with; and this he brought about, not by the rigidity of a martinet, or the pragmatical pedantry of a task-master, but by a perception of character which always enabled him to make the right appeal at the right moment, to bring out the latent good in the nature of his best men, and then to use that good as a precedent for the future conduct of themselves, and as a stimulus, a reproach, and an inducement to others. At the same time, he was always liberal, but always judiciously so; never demoralising with prodigal open-handedness or capricious largesse; but apportioning reward to desert as nearly as practicable, though perpetually finding out and recompensing merit, where the owner himself often little suspected its possession.

Undoubtedly, he often had sore trials of temper in the fitfulness, obstinacy, and unreasoning and intolerable waywardness of many of those for whose welfare he was most assiduous, and whose intractable vagaries would frequently upset his best laid plans in the very moment of their seeming fruition. But his self-command, resolution, and tact, beat down or out-maneuvred all combinations; and in almost every state of the labour market, whether a glut or a scarcity, or whatever the suddenness of the fluctuation in the supply as compared with the demand, he was able to keep his time with engineers, and his reputation with the general public. From day to day the difficulties of this kind diminished. The conviction grew that he invariably meant fair by all parties, as he uniformly acted fairly by all. The intelligent classes had long recognised in him a man of the highest public spirit, though keeping himself strictly aloof from all matters of public disputation, yet without the smallest forfeiture of the independence of private judgment that should belong to him. The humbler classes speedily followed also in discovering that his private enterprises kept pace with his public gains, and that his capital was being turned in all directions to fertilise the soil, to invigorate the commerce, and to advance the condition of the people among whom his lot was cast, and by whose instrumentality he was enabled to reciprocate the benefits he derived. As in the case of that other most exemplary friend of Ireland, Mr. Bianconi, the great public car proprietor in the west, it became a matter of rivalry and ambition to work for such an employer, whether as

a railway contractor, a railway owner (for he leases more than one line), a steam-packet proprietor, a flax grower, or a farmer. Both of the latter pursuits are followed by him extensively and scientifically, solely with a view to example, in several parts of the country; and with the best possible results, as was seen by the splendid produce of his dairies and of vegetable cultivation at the last Great Smithfield Show in London, whereat all the leading agriculturists joined in admiration of the economic processes by which such quantity and quality were obtained.

Notwithstanding the immensity and multiplicity of his operations, such was either the retiring disposition of Mr. Dargan, or his disdain of the usual clap-trap artifices in acquiring a name in the public mouth, that he was scarcely ever heard of out of Ireland, and only there incidentally, for, as just observed, he eschewed all interference with political or religious disputations, which was equivalent to incurring comparative cypherhood in an atmosphere where opinion estimates men by the noise they make, rather than by the work they do. An event, however, was now approaching which forced upon Mr. Dargan a degree of renown as wide as the most ambitious civilian could well aspire to; and so well deserved, originating in motives so pure, and sustained by impulses to exalted, philanthropic, and disinterested, that the most acrid cynicism cannot hint a drawback to the gratification it should afford him. Towards the end of 1851, the prescient eye of Mr. Roney—well known in England, and whose capacity for administering the affairs of great mercantile companies and associations had long been established—fore-saw that there was about to be an "exodus," as the saying is, of the British travelling public into Ireland. This idea he soon made apparent to the chairman of the Chester and Holyhead Railway, Mr. S. M. Peto, whose name is scarcely less known in any country in Europe than his own, owing to the vastness and general diffusion of his railway enterprises. Mr. Peto, having had long experience of Mr. Roney's peculiar aptitude of the kind referred to, embraced the suggestions offered, with a promptitude alike flattering to the discernment of the one and confidence of the other, as the issue proved. Forthwith Mr. Roney developed the highly-complicated but most simply-executed scheme, known as the "Tourist Traffic System," whereby the requirements of the travelling public were met with a completeness which, all things considered, would have been declared wholly impossible three months before the machinery was in full operation, and which would have been utterly impossible in any other hands. According to the *Times* of the 18th of November, in its review of Sir Francis Head's "Fortnight in Ireland," upwards of 200,000 English tourists visited that country in 1852. This enormous crowd, equal to the entire population of a German principality, or South American republic, made their acquaintance with the island at probably, on an average cost per head, one-fifth what they would have been able to do but for the suggestion of Mr. Roney's system; while the country and all the railway companies were immensely benefitted, and the foundation laid for the illimitable future extension of the same plan. Ireland was full of English visitors, who expressed their admiration of what they saw, and their delight with the civility and attention lavished upon them by a people whose natural disposition was pronounced to be worthy of their scenery and soil—and the force of flattery could no further go. The common topic of conversation was, of course, the wonders of the World's Fair the previous summer in Hyde-park, where every one had been, and whence every one had carried some idea to interchange for neighbouring's. A Lilliputian reproduction of the Brobdingnag structure had been got up at Cork, and with very great success, though confined only to the contributions of the neighbourhood. The sentiment of the desirability of a Great Irish Exhibition, doubtless, occurred simultaneously to numbers all over the country; but, as the poet defines wit to be, what was

"Oft thought before, but ne'er so well expressed,"—

so these vague, dreamy, and as yet voiceless predilections had to be reduced to form and substance and tangibility; and they

were, by Messrs. Dargan and Roney. When, where, or under what circumstances these gentlemen originally came together, we have not heard. But certain it is there ensued from this meeting a mutual recognition of capacity, ingenuousness, and determination which has resulted in a conviction that the two individuals were essential to the completion of the purpose which then germinated, perhaps unconsciously, in the mind of either. Wholly devoid of jealousy, superior to the littleness that would seek the gratification of a paltry vanity by enforcing obscurity on others, as shown by his rejection of a titular honour proffered by the late Lord-Lieutenant, Mr. Dargan not only insisted on keeping altogether in the background, but that Mr. Roney, as his representative on the committee, should become the secretary of the undertaking. This Mr. Roney did, stipulating only that his position should be honorary, his services gratuitous, and immediately he proceeded to justify in Ireland the expectations which his English antecedents had already created.

The unparalleled act of Mr. Dargan in placing £20,000 at the disposal of the committee, would in itself have been sufficient to stamp any project with abundant éclat in any part of the world, and to ensure the donor an universal celebrity. But what lent it the prestige of assured success in the eyes of persons who were to be called upon to send to it those articles which alone could make it what it ought to be, was the knowledge that a practical man like Mr. Roney had pledged himself to realise Mr. Dargan's aspirations, by achieving for Ireland an eminent industrial status among nations, and thus, by one effort, obliterate the odium of ages. Accordingly, his reception on the continent, with many of the languages of which he is well acquainted (he was partly educated in France), was in the highest degree gratifying. The letters he took from the English Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs secured him, of course, the co-operation of the whole British corps diplomatique abroad, and procured him admission to circles that would have been otherwise impervious to all private efforts. But in the countenance personally extended to him by the Emperor of the French, the King of the Belgians and of Prussia, and by the various Dutch, Austrian, and other continental authorities, and all the great manufacturing and artistic interests of every kind, in the course of his extensive tours, there was a heartiness and cordiality far more impressive and significant than what any formal introduction, however exalted, could have commanded. This alone would suffice to guarantee the triumph of Mr. Dargan's idea, independent of the immense support derivable from England, saying nothing of what may be expected from Ireland herself. There the national enthusiasm is going on *crescendo*, from day

to day, as the building advances in all its beauty, and as testimonies continue to pour in from every quarter of the compass to the friendly rivalry and amicable emulation which the project has everywhere awakened. At first it was apprehended, and not without good reason, that the short period that would elapse between its opening and the close of its great predecessor would preclude any hope of success. The active exertions of those who devoted themselves to the task, however, soon dissipated this idea, and instead of a dearth there quickly came *l'embarras de richesses*: the conviction that the undertaking would be *too* successful; for such was the avidity to avail of space, so numerous the applications from the leading contributors to the Crystal Palace, and so unexpected and wholly unforeseen the new quarters whence solicitations and overtures emanated, that the building, as originally contemplated, was soon found to be wholly inadequate.

Mr. Roney, well knowing on whom he had to rely, instead of circumscribing his scope and concentrating his efforts when he saw how brilliantly the scheme was being taken up, put forth fresh feelers, and derived fresh strength and daring from each response. Mr. Dargan added another £6,000 to the original sum. Again the work proceeded; and again Mr. Dargan seconded the efforts of his ally by still another advance of £14,000—making a total of £40,000! Here it has been necessary to stop, not from the exhaustion of Mr. Dargan's liberality, and still less, if that be possible, by a cessation of the consequences we have been particularising; but because of the pressure of inexorable time, the necessity of now seeking to mature and perfect what had been so sumptuously initiated. On that object the energies of the Dublin executive are now being brought to bear. The erection of the building is keeping pace precisely with the calculations on which it has been erected. We do not wish to encumber this paper with details of its dimensions and peculiarities, and shall content ourselves with saying that it is after the design of Mr. Benson, C.E., who erected the Cork Exhibition already alluded to. Selected from among twenty-nine competing designs,—the rivalry being provoked far less by the proffered prize of £50, than by the desire to participate in the fame redounding from a prominent association in such a work—it is uniquely beautiful; and though it has necessarily much in common with the Crystal Palace, it is in no respect a plagiarism of that conception, and abounds in merits of its own that stamp it as thoroughly original. Be the result of the Exhibition what it may—and it is impossible to believe it can fail to be all and everything its projector and creator can expect—the remembrance of 1853 will at least confer an enviable immortality on William Dargan, and for ever “keep memory his green” with a grateful and admiring posterity.

## ARAB ART.

We have been induced to give the present drawings, in consequence of the exquisite taste, the elegance, and richness of ornamentation which distinguish the three Algerian objects from which they are made. Though destined for common uses, these objects are really perfect little works of art, and every nation can but gain by the introduction of such drawings. However skilful other countries may be in goldsmith's and jeweller's work, they may yet learn many a useful thing from the fertile imagination of the Arabs.

In the first place, we have a silver powder-flask, which was taken from the Beni Abbes at the time of Marshal Bugeaud's expedition against the Cabyles. This powder-flask is filled by unscrewing the polygonal knob *a*. From *b* hang the strings by which it is suspended. By pressing the thumb on the curved lever, *c*, the orifice, *e*, through which the powder falls into the pan of the gun, is discovered. The leaves, as well as all the other ornaments of this powder-flask, are worked in

hollow relief, but are somewhat sunk away in consequence of the frequent use made of it.

Our second design is that of a silver Moorish bottle. Its octagonal shape is far from being common for this kind of bottle. The stopple, furnished with sides, and made of coral, is terminated by a ferrule, having in its centre a horn point, about an inch long, and half an inch in diameter. Its extremity is dipped in a solution of antimony, which the Moorish women use to trace a black line along their eye-lids, and to prolong the angle formed by the *commissure* of the upper and lower eye-lid—a singular custom, which is also practised sometimes in Paris. In the evening, at places of public resort, at the concerts, and at the theatres, you meet with young women whose eye-lids are painted in a manner which deceives no one. We suppose they think that they thus increase the brilliancy of their eyes or make them appear larger! But Fashion indulges in strange freaks, of which it is sometimes